

WITNESS STATEMENT

Criminal Procedure Rules, r 27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s. 9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5B

Crime No. URN

Statement of Ben READER

Age if under 18 Over 18 (if over 18 insert "over 18")

Occupation Police Constable 2413

This statement (consisting of 2 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: (witness)

Date 2nd June 2023Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded (supply witness details on rear)

I am PC 2413 Reader, a specialist licensing officer based at Lloyd House, Police Headquarters in Birmingham.

Today, Friday 2nd June, I attended GNG Food and Wine, 16 Church Road, Nechells, Birmingham B6 5UP.

I attended with Chris Jones, from the licensing team and we met two local uniformed officers, PC 23776 Sykes and PC 24187 Tandy, from a local NHT.

We arrived at the premises at just after midday. PC Sykes turned on her bodycam and began to record. I explained that we were attending as the licensing team had been made aware that the premises had been selling vapes to underage persons, a 13 year old girl had stated she had been served vapes at this location.

Inside the premises was one member of staff, Rohit SADHARWHAN.

He said he was working in the shop for his Uncle and Aunt.

His Uncle, Gurnaik Singh Randhawa was the licence holder and his Aunt, Gursharan Randhawa Kaur was the DPS. They were away at a wedding, so he was looking after the shop.

Rohit had not been trained to be working in a licensed premises.

It was clear he did not know much about the operation of the premises and I was disappointed to find a man with so little knowledge working behind the counter.

As I was speaking to him I could see boxes of Vapes on display. These were all within the 600 puff limit and appeared legitimate products.

Under the counter I noticed a transparent plastic tub, like a take away food container. This container has loose cigarettes inside it. This raised concerns with me as cigarettes should not be sold as singles.

Rohit had no answer as to why they were under the counter in a plastic tub.

Signature

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As I looked further, there was another tub with more singles in it.

Next to the tub I saw a large kitchen knife which was clearly out of place. There were multiple Stanley knives and box cutters under the counter, which would make sense in a shop where boxes were opened on a daily basis. The large kitchen knife did not appear to be there for a lawful purpose so it was seized by PC 24187 Tandy. There was also a hockey stick behind the counter, which again was out of place and I had concerns that these two items were there as weapons behind the counter so PC Tandy also seized the hockey stick.

There were empty boxes under the counter for vapes with a capacity of 3500 puffs.

In a plain box, under the counter were a number of 3500 puff vapes. In my opinion, these had been knowingly concealed and stored under the counter as they are illegal vapes. These were also seized by PC Tandy.

The premises also had a supply of disposable plastic cups, these caused me concern, as they are usually given to customers purchasing alcohol who drink it on the street instead of taking it home.

The premises also had cannabis grinders for sale, as well as smoking pipes.

The premises is clearly not promoting the licensing objectives, in fact it is the exact opposite, they are going against the licensing objectives and are prepared to sell illegal products to children in order to make profit.

Signature 

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Signature: (witness) [Handwritten Signature]

Date 7th June 2023

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded (supply witness details on rear)

I am PC 2413 Reader, a specialist licensing officer based at Lloyd House, Police Headquarters in Birmingham.

Today, Wednesday 7th June, I attended GNG Food and Wine, 16 Church Road, Nechells, Birmingham B6 5UP.

I attended with Chris Jones, from the licensing team, in order to serve the review paperwork upon the licence holder.

The licence holder, Mr Gurnaik Singh Randhawa was present, as was his wife, Gursharan Randhawa Kaur, who is the DPS.

At 15:55 hours I handed Mr Randhawa the paperwork and he began to look through it. He was very defensive and providing excuses for the matters that had been raised in the paperwork.

Both Chris Jones and myself advised Mr Randhawa to seek some legal or specialist advice from a licensing consultant.

Neither the licence holder or the DPS could tell me any of the four licensing objectives.

They just said that they would not sell to under 18s and that "we know what common sense is"

They stated that they had not been trained in a long time, several years.

Mr Randhawa said he could not operate the CCTV system and he had 'no idea' how long it saved for as his son did that for him.

There was no signage in place around any form of 'Challenge' policy for age verification and Mr Randhawa said that they operated a 'Challenge 18' policy in the premises and asked for ID if they didn't think the person was 18. I asked about Challenge 21 and Challenge 25 but they stated they used Challenge 18.

Signature [Handwritten Signature]

Signature witnessed by

OFFICIAL – (when complete)

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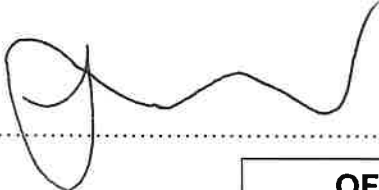
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Statement of **Ben READER**

As a licenising officer I did not have confidence that the licence holder or the DPS were competent people to promote the licensing objectives.

This is further compounded by the fact that there were a number of concerning breaches found on the first visit to the premises.



Signature

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